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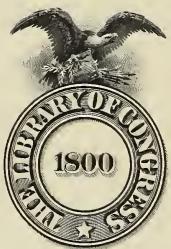
Winter of 1864-65

Written by

Major General Grenville M. Dodge

Read to the

Colorado Commandery
Loyal Legion of the United States
At Denver, April 21, 1907

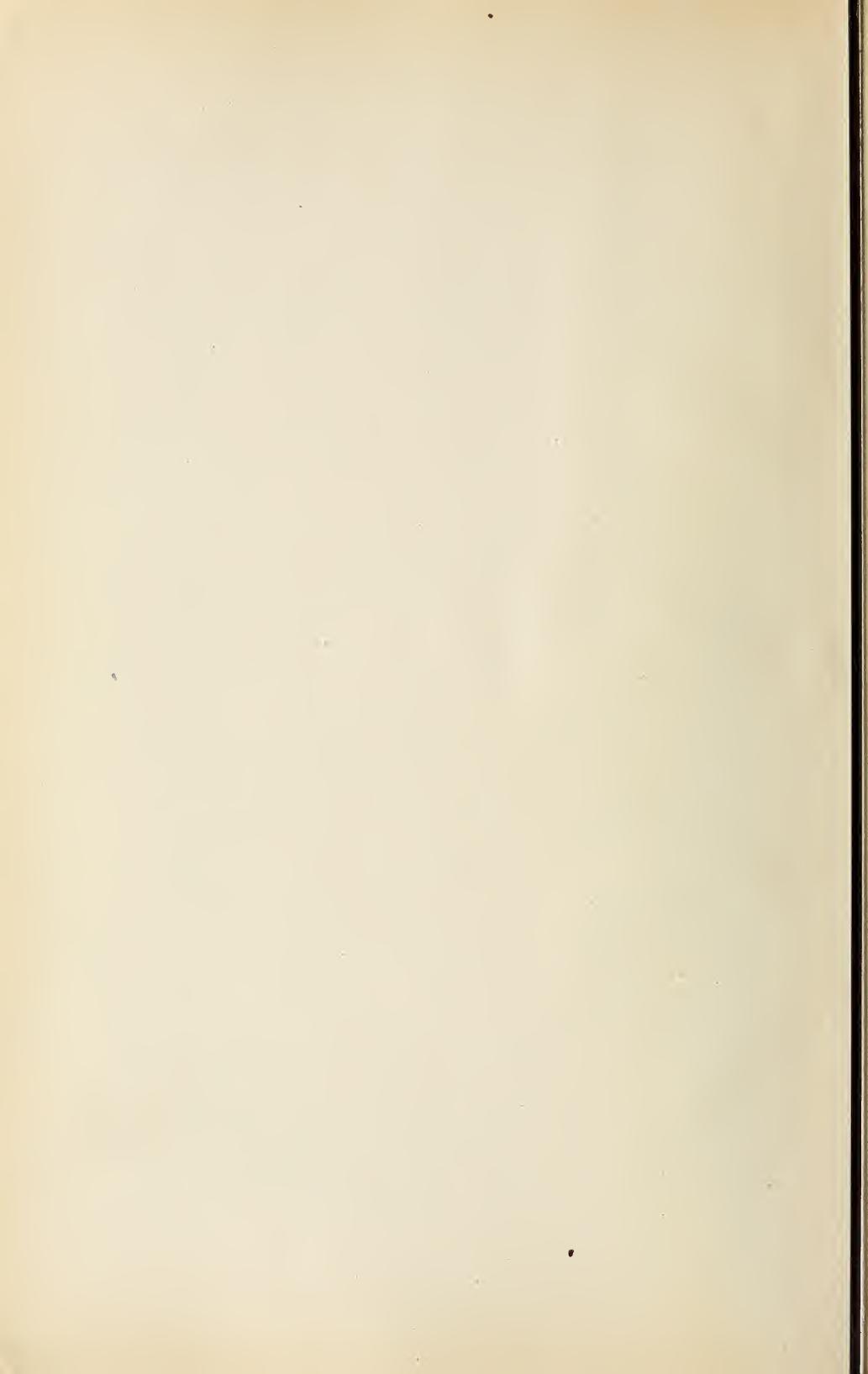


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Many interesting papers have been read at the meetings of the Loyal Legion, but one of the most instructive and entertaining was that of GENERAL GRENVILLE M. DODGE giving his first public account of his campaign against the Indians on the plains in 1864-5.

GENERAL DODGE's military experience and knowledge of the West peculiarly fitted him for this difficult and arduous duty, and his reports and the accounts here given show that he most successfully accomplished the work and won a signal victory over the most vindictive, barbarous and treacherous enemies our soldiers have ever been called on to fight.

GENERAL DODGE, since the close of the war, has been engaged in great railroad and engineering enterprises, and today stands at the head of his profession in this particular work, and is a man of national reputation.

Your committee take great pleasure in having the address printed for the members of our Commandery and others interested.

Gift
M.O.L.C. H.S. Oregon
JL 7'09

INDIAN CAMPAIGN—1864-65

In December, 1864, I was assigned to the command of the Department of Missouri. In January, 1865, I received a dispatch from General Grant asking if a campaign on the plains could be made in the Winter. I answered: "Yes, if the proper preparation was made to clothe and bivouac the troops." A few days after, I received a dispatch from General Grant ordering me to Fort Leavenworth. In the meantime the Department of Kansas was merged into the Department of the Missouri, placing under my command Missouri, the Indian Territory, Kansas, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and all the country south of the Yellowstone river, and embracing all the overland mail routes and telegraph lines to the Pacific.

On reaching Fort Leavenworth I found that General Curtis, the former commander of that Department, had reported against any campaign during the Winter; that the Indians had possession of the entire country crossed by the stage lines, having destroyed the telegraph lines; and that the people living in Colorado, Western Nebraska and Western Kansas were without mails, and in a state of panic; that the troops distributed along the routes of travel were inside of their stockades, the Indians having in nearly every fight defeated them. This success had brought into hostility with the United States nearly every tribe of Indians from Texas on the south to the Yellowstone on the north. It was a formidable combination, and the friendly Indians were daily leaving the reservations to join their hostile brethren. Two thousand Indians had destroyed over one hundred miles of telegraph, and were in possession of the country between the Arkansas and the North Platte rivers.

The opinion at Fort Leavenworth before I arrived was that it was impossible to make a successful campaign against these Indians during the Winter and successfully

open these lines of communication. There were two regiments of cavalry in Kansas, mostly idle. There was no communication with any of the posts except by messenger. A dispatch from Colorado showed a panic there, and the people demanded that troops of the Department be stationed there to protect the citizens, instead of their organizing and fighting the Indians, and that martial law had been declared.

I saw, after spending a day at Fort Leavenworth, that it was necessary to change the depressed feeling and temper existing among the troops and the citizens throughout the Department. I sent for Bela M. Hughes, agent of the overland stages, and Edward Craighen, general manager and superintendent of the overland telegraph, and consulted fully with them. I selected from my old guides some of the most trusted men, and some of the trusted Indians that I had known, and sent by them to each district commander who could be reached, these two short dispatches:

"1. What measures are you taking to keep open the route and protect it? What Indians are engaged in the struggle? Where are their villages? Do their families travel with them? Have you spies in their camps? What action have you taken to repair telegraph lines? Give me all particulars.

"2. Place every mounted man in your command on the South Platte route. Repair telegraphs, attack any body of Indians you meet, large or small. Stay with them and pound them until they move north of the Platte or south of the Arkansas. I am coming with two regiments of cavalry to the Platte line and will open and protect it, and whip all the Indians in the way."

I also found that the plains were covered with Indian traders who had permits, under the guise of which they were stealing from the Indians, both friendly and hostile, and were selling them arms and ammunition. I immediately revoked all these permits, and ordered the arrest of all traders who had in their possession Indian or Government stock. I also immediately wired to Maj. Frank North, who

was the interpreter of the Pawnee Indians, and also to the Chief of the Omaha Indians, both of whom had been with me on the plains, and instructed them to select their most trusted men and send them on the plains to ascertain for me the purpose of the hostile Indians, and whether they would head towards the settlements, or if their movements indicated they would attack only the lines of communication and the trains crossing the plains. At the same time we stopped all trains on the plains and ordered them to the nearest military post, instructing the officers to arm and organize them in companies, and place a United States officer over them, and have them move with the army trains.

Having perfected the preliminary organization for moving upon the stage and telegraph lines, we saw it was necessary to concentrate on one line. At this time the stage and telegraph lines on the north ran from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Kearney, and from Omaha to Fort Kearney, where they were consolidated, running up the Platte valley to the mouth of the Lodgepole, the stage station at that point being known as Julesburg. The lines here separated again, the main telegraph line running to old Fort Laramie, thence up the Sweetwater through South Pass and thence to Utah. The stage line ran up the South Platte to Denver, then by the Cache La Poudre to Laramie Plains, over them to Fort Hallack and Bridger and on to Utah. I concluded to concentrate all our efforts to open the line from Fort Leavenworth and Omaha to Kearney, thence to Denver and on to Utah, known as the South Platte Route.

The overland route from Fort Leavenworth and Omaha crossing the continent had a stage station about every twelve miles. The troops along the lines were posted at the forts and stockades about every hundred miles, with a few soldiers distributed at each stage station. Then scattered along the road were ranches, relay and feeding stations for the regular commercial and supply trains that were continually on the road. The great mining camps, and all the inhabitants of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and

Idaho were dependent upon these trains for their supplies. In winter these trains were generally mule trains of twenty wagons each, and during the summer were generally ox trains of fifty to one hundred wagons each. They were in the habit of straggling along through the country; taking care of themselves. Their stock had to be herded at night, and it was a great temptation to the Indians to steal, and a great deal of this had been done, but no actual fighting or attacking of trains or troops occurred until the winter of '64 and '65. The stopping of these trains, mail and supplies, and the destruction of the telegraph wires, caused great consternation in that country and on the Pacific Coast, and the demands upon the government to open and maintain these lines were persistent.

At Fort Leavenworth there appeared to have been no systematic effort to reopen these lines. It seemed that the troops were taking care of the posts and resisting attacks. They did not seem to appreciate the Indian character; that the only way to strengthen and protect the lines of communication was to go for the Indians. What troops had been sent against the Indians were small and weak parties, and had evidently gone out with the intention of locating the Indians and avoiding them.

Along the south emigrant line from Kansas City, following the Arkansas river to New Mexico, was the line of supplies for all of New Mexico and Southern Colorado. The Indians here were in possession. The travel and traffic along it were not to be compared with that along the northern lines. Then again the citizens of Kansas and Nebraska had settled along these routes as far west as the 100th Meridian, obtaining their living from this great traffic, and the Indians in their raids had picked them up, family at a time, until they had a great many prisoners, mostly women and children, the men being generally massacred when captured.

I found the 11th Kansas Cavalry at Fort Riley, and the 16th Kansas Cavalry at Fort Leavenworth, and immediately placed them en route for Fort Kearney. All the posts

were, unfortunately, short of subsistence, forage and ammunition. The three months' regiments enlisted in Colorado for the Indian service had been discharged, their time having expired, and there had been no troops sent to take their place. My only resource was to utilize the Colorado militia until I could send troops six hundred miles to take their places.

I immediately started for Fort Kearney, taking with me a few soldiers in the stage and one of my staff. It was the opinion of all the officers at Fort Leavenworth that it would be impossible for me to make the trip, but I knew it required personal presence among the troops to bring about quick results. The troops that I had ordered to march from Fort Riley refused to march in the winter. I answered to place under arrest all officers of the companies and regiments that refused to obey the order, and have them report to Fort Leavenworth, intending to replace them with veteran officers of the Department whom I knew would move, no matter what the hardship. The next morning I received a report from Fort Riley that the troops would move. The regiment that marched from Fort Riley to Fort Kearney lost thirteen men from freezing, as the weather was very severe, and while they were properly clothed, they did not know how to protect themselves from the weather.

On my arrival at Fort Kearney I immediately notified Mr. Hughes, agent of the stage lines, that I was prepared to protect his stages, and called upon him to replace his stock immediately, ready to start out his stages. I also notified Mr. Crighten, superintendent of the telegraph lines, to replace his operators, for I would have his lines open in a few days. Both of these orders were made known to the public. I also notified the "press" at Omaha and Fort Leavenworth that all trains which were tied up on the plains would be moved to their destinations during that month. We found it necessary to inspire energy and confidence in these three great interests, as not one of them even thought we would succeed, and in fact the "press"

comments on our orders showed that they had no faith in them. I found on the line of the Platte the 7th Iowa Cavalry, and at Fort Laramie and on the Sweetwater the 11th Ohio Cavalry.

When we arrived in sight of Fort Kearney the troops were prepared to fight us, thinking it was a band of Indians. We discovered that the troops were depressed from the success of the Indians and the murder and mutilation of their comrades, and that they hardly stuck their heads out of the stockade. Having had experience with Indians, I called the troops together and instructed them how to handle and to fight Indians, telling them that an aggressive war would be made against the Indians, and no matter how large the Indian bands were, or how small the troop, that hereafter they must stand and fight; that if they did the Indians would run. If they did not, the Indians would catch and scalp them, and even if they had to retreat, they must do so with their faces to the enemy.

The Indians, after the Chivington fight on Big Sandy, had concentrated upon the South Platte and on the Sweetwater. The reports showed that they held possession from Julesburg to Valley Junction and to Mud Springs, and held the telegraph line west of Fort Laramie. They had with them two thousand head of captured stock and had captured all the stage stations, many trains, devastated the ranches, butchered many men, women and children, and destroyed one hundred miles of telegraph.

To show more plainly than I can describe the condition of the country, I give the reports of the three commanding officers along the South Platte route, in answer to the dispatches which I sent by messenger to all commanders the day I arrived at Fort Leavenworth. These answers met me at Fort Kearney.

Gen. Robt. Mitchell, who commanded the territory from Omaha to Lodgepole, replied as follows:

"The telegraph from Lodgepole creek, 25 miles west to Julesburg, on Laramie route, is destroyed for 15 miles. Poles cut down and destroyed on the Denver line beyond

Julesburg for the first 50 miles. The telegraph is destroyed about 10 miles north. We are compelled to haul poles from 130 to 140 miles. Every means in my power is used to have the lines fixed. All the available troops I have at my disposal are in the vicinity of Julesburg, except some small garrisons at posts required to be kept up on the Denver route. My district only extends to Julesburg. I have sent some troops, however, up that route 50 miles since the outbreaks and find everything destroyed. We have no communication with Denver, and have not had since the last outbreak. Neither can I communicate with Fort Laramie in consequence of the lines being down. I have been traversing the country constantly on and adjacent to the mail and telegraph lines during the past four months, sending guards on the stage and, when deemed necessary, mounted guards and patrols on all dangerous portions of the road through my district.

"This plan succeeded until an overpowering force attacked Julesburg and drove the troops inside of their works and burnt the stage and telegraph station, destroying a large amount of stores for both companies. The overland stage cannot run through until they can provide for supplies for stock from Julesburg to the Junction, where overland stage leaves Denver route, everything belonging to the stage company, citizens and government being entirely destroyed. The Indian villages are unknown to us. From the best information I have I believe them to be on the Powder river. I know certainly there is a large village there. There have been no squaws in the country, to my knowledge, since last fall. The tribes engaged are the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, Brule, Ogallala Sioux, a portion of the Blackfeet, and a large portion of what is known as the Missouri River Sioux, the same Indians General Sully made the campaign against last summer. From 3,000 to 5,000 additional troops will be needed to punish the Indians. One column will never be able to overtake them, unless they are willing to give battle. I think three columns of men 1,000 strong, each with ample garrison

on the overland mail and telegraph lines, well mounted and supplied, can clear out the country of all hostile Indians, if done before grass comes. After that time, in my judgment, it will take twice that number of men.

"In addition to the troubles west, I would not be surprised any day to hear of an outbreak in the northern part of my district. I am informed by Indian scouts that there is a large encampment of Indians on the Running Water that are ready to engage in the war against the whites. Among them are some of the Yanktonis Sioux."

Col. R. R. Livingston reported as follows: "In reply to your inquiries I would respectfully state that in the early part of January last indications of large parties of Indians moving westward on Republican were reported by the scouts sent to gain information of their movements. On January 7th they had crossed South Fork Platte river, 23 miles west of this post, camped with their families, forming a camp of 400 lodges, containing eight warriors each, many lodges being thirty robes in size. They commenced the work of destruction along the road west as far as Junction Station, 100 miles from here. Their forces in this fight were not less than 2,000, well armed with breech-loading carbines and rifles. A desperate attempt on their part to burn the overland stage station near this post was made at this time, but was frustrated by the gallantry of Captain N. J. O'Brien, Company F, 7th Iowa Cavalry. Every ranch and stage station from Junction station to this post is burned, and the charred remains of every inmate who failed to escape tell of the brutality they were subjected to. I telegraphed Hon. Sam H. Elbert, acting governor of Colorado, early in January of the state of things. The troops of Colorado have been withdrawn from Valley, 50 miles west of here, I surmise, to concentrate around Denver. The telegraph lines to Salt Lake, and the Denver branch lines are destroyed for a distance of nearly ten miles on the northern route, and in different points throughout one hundred miles along the Denver.

"I have but 360 troops, but so long as human endur-

ance holds out we will work night and day to get the communication perfect with the west.

"The Indians engaged in this war are the Cheyenne, Ogallalas, Brule and Sioux. They have gone northward towards Horse creek and Fort Laramie. Their trail leads in that direction, but they are slow in marching, feeling audacious and indifferent to any effort from the small body of troops in this district. I saw their signals today, probably those of small war parties, on the North Platte. You will hear of continued murders and robberies as long as the road is so poorly protected by troops. No spies can be used now, owing to numerous small war parties being met everywhere in this country. I predict that if more troops are not sent into this district immediately, this road will be stripped of every ranch and white man on it. Should these Indians swing around by Lea Oui Court river and strike the Omaha road below Kearney, where settlements are numerous, infinite mischief will result to the settlers. What we need are troops, supplies for them, and a vigorous campaign against these hostile Indians. They must be put on the defensive instead of us. No difficulty can arise in finding them. Over 2,000 cattle accompany them."

"HEADQUARTERS, DISTRICT COLORADO,

"Denver, Colo. Territory, Feb. 2, 1865.

"The Indians are bold in the extreme. They have burned every ranch between Julesburg and Valley Station, and nearly all the property at latter place; driven off all stock, both public and private. These Indians are led by white men, and have complete control of all the country outside my district, so that I am hemmed in.

"The weather has been very severe here for nearly three weeks; the thermometer 30 degrees below zero, with quite a fall of snow on the ground. I have tried every means in my power to raise volunteers for three months' state service, but as yet have not succeeded, owing to the factional spirit existing in the community.

"The Legislature took the matter in hand at my suggestion, appropriating so much money, Territorial bonds, to give the men a bounty and purchase horses to mount them on, as I have none, but the members cannot agree on the spoil, likely in their estimation to accrue from such a proceeding, so the bill has not yet passed. I addressed the speaker of the house yesterday, informing him that unless something was done within forty-eight hours I would be compelled, much against my will, to proclaim martial law and stop all business, forcing every man to enter the ranks and open the line of communication. I have now a city organization of about 100 men organized into companies, so that in case of an attack here I would have something tangible to lay hold of and make a fight. I have had a great deal of trouble in this matter, as there is no concert of action, every man suspecting his fellow of some chicanery.

"Fort Lyon is being rapidly fortified, so that 200 men can defend it against 2,000 Indians. Militia companies are being organized all over the settled parts of the country (under penalty of being pressed into service) to defend the frontier settlements southward, and could I but get a regiment here now I could keep things in a running trim until the arrival of sufficient force to make a campaign. The Indians are now determined to make it a war of extermination and nothing short of 5,000 men can make it extermination for them.

"Major Wynkoop informed me from Fort Lyon that many warriors were on the headwaters of the Smoky Hill and intended attacking all the settlements as well as Denver. Provisions, owing to the transportation line being cut off, are at an exorbitant price, as well as labor and forage.

"Cannot troops be sent out here immediately, or authority to raise companies, which could be easily done, for one year?

"The Santa Fe line has threatened to stop running on account of the Indians. Should such be the case, then all is cut off. Respectfully your obdient servant,

"THOMAS MOONLIGHT,
"Col. 11th Kansas Cavalry, "Commanding."

Col. Chivington, from Fort Rankin, reported: "Lieut. Col. Collins with 200 men of the 11th Ohio, and Company D, 7th Iowa Cavalry, fought Indians from the 4th to the 9th inst., at Mud Springs. The Indians at one time charged our forces in the face of artillery and were nearly successful. Two thousand warriors were engaged in the fight. It is supposed forty Indians were killed. Beaure's and Craighen's herds were driven off. The Indians crossed at Bush creek, going north. The telegraph poles were gone and wires so inextricably tangled as to be useless. Seven hundred lodges crossed Pole creek, six miles below Pole creek crossing."

These Indians were not driven off and the telegraph lines retaken without severe fighting and loss of many soldiers. Within two weeks the troops drove these Indians north, where a detachment of troops from Fort Laramie attacked them and drove them across the Platte. Finally the Indians saw that a different warfare was being made against hem, and they fled to their villages on the Powder river and in the Black Hills country.

There was such energy and such spirit displayed by the troops, that after two weeks' work they had the telegraph lines replaced between Omaha and Denver, a distance of 600 miles, and this without any additional force to aid them. The progress made in putting up the wires is shown by this report:

"My troop is at Moore's ranch, passed there at two o'clock. We ran twelve miles of wire and set eight miles of poles, had two severe fights, and marched 55 miles in 52 hours. Operators furnished valuable service.

"E. B. MURPHY, Capt. 7th Iowa Cavalry."

The thermometers all this time were from five to ten degrees below zero. On February 13th telegraphic communication was resumed through to California, and Mr. Craighen notified the government of the fact.

An inquiry made of Craighen by General Grant, as to where I was located (Craighen, being a personal friend of mine, who was most skeptical at the start of my ac-

complishing anything with the material I had, was overjoyed at our success), was answered: "Nobody knows where he is, but everybody knows where he has been."

From the 5th to the 13th of February every mounted man on that line was in the saddle, either assisting the operators or chasing real or imaginary Indians. The moment a scout came in, instructions were given to the officers to send them out and not allow any mounted troops in the stockade until the lines were opened and the Indians driven at least 100 miles away from the line of telegraph, and the only dashes the Indians made after we got fairly at them was to cut off a part of an unguarded train, and at unguarded ranches, and at those stage stations where only a few soldiers were located, but in every attack the soldiers stood their ground and fought, and when driven they only backed far enough to get a secure place. The troops knew better than to go back to the fortified posts, as they had instructions to keep to the hills, but in nearly every case they were successful, and the daring that some of the troops showed in these fights was remarkable.

Great atrocities were committed by the Indians, scalping the men alive and abusing the women. This caused the troops to stand and fight, preferring to die rather than to fall into their hands. Wherever a fight was successfully made, no matter whether commissioned or non-commissioned officers commanded, I telegraphed him in person thanking him, and to the commanding officer of his regiment, requesting that he be given the first promotion, and wrote to the governor of his State.

As soon as this stage line was opened we concentrated about five hundred mounted men, intending to catch the Indians before they left the North Platte, but the Indians fled as soon as they heard of this, and did not stop until they reached Powder river, too far north for us to follow until arrangements were made for supplies for troops and stock, as everything had to be teamed from Fort Leavenworth.

The storms during March were very severe. Snow

lay two feet on the level and was crusted so hard that for weeks it was almost impossible to force animals through it. As soon as we heard from my scouts of the departure of the Indians and found they had no intention of molesting the citizens of Nebraska, and had placed themselves on Powder river too far north to return until the return of the grass in May, I distributed the troops along the stage and telegraph lines to Salt Lake, and returned to open the South route to New Mexico.

My experience on the North route, with the reports from the troops and from my Indians, soon satisfied me that every Indian tribe of any importance, from the British possessions in the north to the Red river in the south, were preparing to engage in open hostilities. These tribes often pretended to be friendly, deceiving the government and the Indian agent, a crafty trick that was impossible to make the government understand. For instance, they would go to the Indian agent for provisions, and would make him believe that they were for peace, and would promise to bring to the agency their tribe. Probably by the time the report of the Indian agent reached the government, this same tribe would be off on the warpath and have captured a train or murdered some settlers, and the troops in return had attacked and destroyed them, and we were called to account for it, as it was claimed by the agents we were attacking peaceable Indians. This went so far that it prevented me from opening the southern emigrant trail several weeks. Finally I took the matter in my own hands, regardless of the action or report of the agents.

While these parleys were going on the Indians suddenly appeared all along the southern emigrant trail in the Arkansas river valley, attacking trains, posts and escorts. I threw my troops against the bands of Southern Arapahoes, Cheyennes, Comanches and Kiowas that were in the vicinity of the trail. The troops had caught on to the severe fighting on the Platte, had heard of the new methods of warfare and victories, and they in all cases stood their ground and defeated the Indians, although they suffered

severely in some instances. This was a reception that the Indians did not expect and they fled to the Wichita mountains, suing for peace, which I knew was simply to prevent us attacking them there, but accomplished its purpose with the government and finally brought about the treaties that were not worth the paper they were written on, and later on forced the campaigns that Sheridan afterwards made, while if we had been allowed to have followed them up and punish them as we did the northern tribes, we would have conquered a peace that would have been a lasting one.

The Indians of the plains are the best skirmishers in the world. In rapidity of movements, in perfect horsemanship, sudden whirling, protecting the body by clinging to the side of the horse, and rapid movements in open and difficult ground, no trained cavalry in the world can equal them. On foot their ability to hide behind any obstruction, in ravine, along creeks and under creek and river banks, and in fighting in the open plains or level ground, the faculty to disappear is beyond one's belief except he has experienced it. In skulking and sharpshooting they are adepts, but troops properly instructed are a match for them on foot and never fail to drive and rout them, if they will stand and fight and never retreat except slowly with their faces to them. I have seen several times, when caught in a tight place, bands of Indians held by a few men by holding to ridges and slowly retreating, always using our rifles at every opportunity when an Indian was in range, never wasting a shot on them unless there was a probability of hitting them. The Indians have a mortal fear of such tactics.

In a fight the Indians will select the positions and pick out quickly any vantage ground, and some times as high as 200 will concentrate at such a point where we could not concentrate 20 men without exposing them, and from this vantage ground they will pour a deadly fire on the troops, and we cannot see an Indian, only puffs of smoke. By such tactics as this they harass and defeat our troops. Many a fight occurred between Indians and soldiers both watch-

ing the smoke to show each other's position. You can watch this kind of a fight and never see a person unless some one is hit and exposes himself, when it is nearly always a sure death. The Indian character is such that he will not stand continual following, pounding and attacking. Their life and methods are not accustomed to it, and the Indians can be driven by very inferior forces by continually watching, attacking and following. None of our campaigns have been successful that have not been prepared to follow the Indians day and night, attacking them at every opportunity until they are worn out, disbanded or forced to surrender, which is the sure result of such a campaign.

The Indians during the months they had been hostile, and especially in their attacks on the stage stations and ranches, had captured a large number of men, women and children. These prisoners had made known to the troops, by dropping notes along the trail and through the reports of friendly Indians, their terrible condition and the usage that was being made of them. Their appeals to us to rescue them were pitiful.

I knew the prisoners would be sent far north to the villages, and their winter quarters out of our reach; that these villages were unprotected because every brave and dog-soldier had his warpaint on and was joining the hostile forces attacking along our lines, which were increasing every day. I also knew it would be impossible for any of our troops to reach them or to rescue them by following them, and as soon as I arrived at Fort Kearney I asked authority of the government to enlist and muster into service two companies of Pawnee Indians, to be under the command of their old interpreter, Major North, who I knew to be a brave, level-headed leader. This authority was immediately given me, and Major North was given confidential instructions to proceed to the Sioux country, apparently on scout duty, but to watch his opportunity and rescue these prisoners, while their braves were down fighting us. He started, but storms of snow came down so

heavy that his ponies could get nothing to eat, and during the latter part of February and all of March these storms were continuous, the snow falling to the depth of two feet over the entire plains. Major North was compelled to seek shelter in the river bottoms, and browsed his stock on cottonwood limbs to save them. In the campaign of the summer and winter of 1865 and 1866 Major North, with his two enlisted companies, to which I added two more, made some wonderful marches, scouts, battles and captures, and during that campaign we recaptured and had surrendered to us many of these women and children prisoners.

After the war Major North became manager of the Indians in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, and died in that service. He was a noted man on the plains. My acquaintance with him commenced in 1856, and together we had seen and endured many hardships. It was seldom one met his equal in any of the different phases of plains life. Although he had led an eventful career, still I never heard him refer to what he had done or accomplished, or the part he had taken in battles, and probably no man was ever more worshipped than he was by the two tribes of Pawnee Indians, and his death was virtually their destruction, for during his life among them he held them under good discipline and kept them away from vice, disease and war.

A great many amusing reports came to me from my scouts and the captured Indians. When on the plains in the 50's I was known among the Indians by the name, in their language, that signified "Long Eye," "Sharp Eye" and "Hawk Eye." This came from the fact that when I first went among them it was as an engineer making surveys through their country. With my engineering instruments I could set a head flag two or three miles away, even further than an Indian could see, and it is their custom to give a practical name to everything. Of course I was not many days on the plains until it reached the Indians that "Long Eye" was there, and in every fight that occurred they had me present. They said I could shoot as far as I could see. The scouts said the Indian

chiefs laid their defeats to that fact. Then again they were very superstitious about my power in other matters. When the overland telegraph was built they were taught to respect it and not destroy it. They were made to believe that it was a great Medicine. This was done after the line was opened to Fort Laramie by stationing several of their most intelligent chiefs at Fort Laramie and others at Fort Kearney, the two posts being three hundred miles apart, and then having them talk to each other over the wire and note the time sent and received. Then we had them mount their fleetest horses and ride as fast as they could until they met at Old Jules' ranch, at the mouth of the Lodgepole, this being about half way between Kearney and Laramie. Of course this was astonishing and mysterious to the Indians. Thereafter you could often see Indians with their heads against the telegraph poles, listening to the peculiar sound the wind makes as it runs along the wires and through the insulators. It is a southing, singing sound. They thought and said it was "Big Medicine" talking. I never could convince them that I could not go to the telegraph poles the same as they did and tell them what was said, or send a message for them to some chief far away, as they had often seen me use my traveling instrument and cut into the line, sending and receiving messages. Then again, most of the noted scouts of the plains who had married into the different tribes had been guides for me, and many of these men were half-breeds, and were with these hostile Indians. Some of them took part with them, but more of them had tried to pacify and bring them to terms, and they gave me information about those who were not engaged in the degradations.

I was supposed to be, by the Indians of the plains, a person of great power and great moment. These half-breeds worked upon their superstitions, endeavoring to convince them it was useless to fight "Long Eye." No doubt my appearing on the plains the time I did, and the fact that from the time I appeared until the time I left, the troops had nothing but success, carried great weight with

them, and seemed to confirm what the old voyageurs and guides told them, and had much influence in causing their abandonment of the Platte country and returning to their villages.

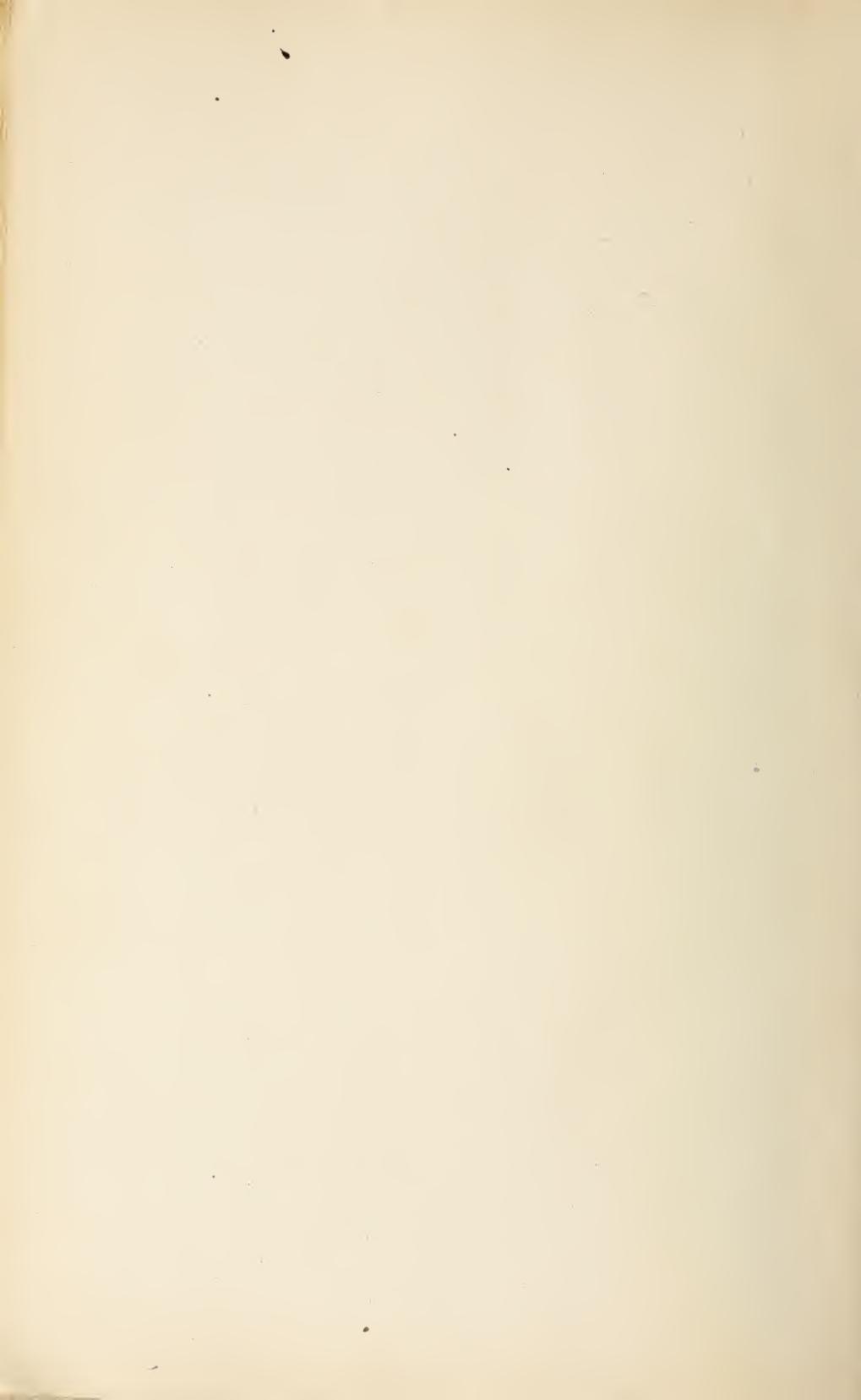
My own experience on the plains led me to be just as watchful and just as vigilant when I knew the Indians were not near me as I was when they were in sight. In all my travels I never allowed them to camp near or occupy my camps, even in the time of peace, when we were friendly, and I never allowed myself to knowingly do them an injustice, and made it a point never to lie to them in any of my councils and treaties, or never allow, if I knew it, the interpreter to deceive them. That brought me respect in all my dealings with them, and I treated them with respect, courtesy and consideration, and demanded the same from them. This, no doubt, was one of the principal reasons that in fifteen years, more or less, intercourse with them, traveling through their country both during the times they were hostile and at peace, that I escaped many of the misfortunes that befell others.

Although this short campaign was not remarkable for great battles or large loss by killed and wounded, still it required great fortitude from the troops, and often great personal courage, and its success was of great moment to the government and to the people of the plains and the Pacific coast, for over these three great overland routes were carried the mails, telegrams, and traffic during the entire war of the Rebellion, which did much to hold these people loyal to our government. A long stoppage was a destruction to business, and would bring starvation and untold misery; and when, with only thirteen days and nights of untiring energy on the part of the troops in a winter of unheard-of severity, California, Utah and Colorado were put in communication with the rest of the world, there was great rejoicing. In seventeen days the stages were started and overland travel was again safe, after being interrupted for two months, and by March 1st the commercial trains were all en route to their destinations and

I had returned to my duties at the headquarters of the Department in St. Louis.

It was with no little satisfaction that I answered a personal letter General Grant had written me, when he assigned me to this duty, and which I found awaiting me at Fort Leavenworth. In his letter he outlined what it was necessary to do and why he had asked me to take the field. He judged rightly of the condition of affairs and the necessity of immediate action. I wrote him how promptly the troops responded to my call. They had opened the overland routes; they had made them secure and were then guarding them, and they would be kept open. But after grass came, unless these hostile Indians were thoroughly chastised, they would certainly and successfully attack them and prevent safe travel overland, and from my letter the order soon came for me to prepare for the extensive campaign of the next summer and winter that followed these Indians to the Yellowstone on the north and the Cimarron on the south, and conquered a peace with every hostile tribe.





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